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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; November 2, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

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JoongAng Ilbo  
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Building Science and Business Belt in Chungcheong Province Emerges  
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Survey: 59 Percent of Respondents Favor  
Revising Controversial Media Reform Bills

Seoul Shinmun  
Spending on Basics Back to Pre-Crisis Levels

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

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According to an ROKG source, the ROK and the U.S. have completed a joint operation plan in case of emergencies in North Korea. Under the so-called "Operational Plan (OPLAN) 5029," most operations will be led by the ROK army, but the U.S. military will be responsible for removing nuclear facilities and weapons. (All)

The U.S. welcomed the ROKG's plan to reinforce its civilian reconstruction team in Afghanistan and send an unspecified number of troops to protect them. White House Spokesman Robert Gibbs was quoted as saying in an Oct. 30 statement: "This is an important contribution to the international effort in Afghanistan and to fostering reconstruction and stability in the region." (Hankyoreh)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Ri Gun, Director General of American Affairs at North Korea's Foreign Ministry, told reporters on Oct. 30 after attending a seminar in New York that he had useful talks with U.S. officials. (Dong-a, Hankyoreh)

On Oct. 30, the EU and Japan submitted to the UN a draft resolution on human rights abuses in North Korea for review for the fifth consecutive year. The ROK co-sponsored the resolution for the second year running. (Chosun, Dong-a, Hankook, Segye)

#### MEDIA ANALYSIS

##### -Aid for Afghanistan

The ROKG's Oct. 30 announcement - that it will reinforce its civilian reconstruction team in Afghanistan and send an unspecified number of troops to protect them - received wide press coverage on Saturday. According to media reports, the specifics of the dispatch, including its size and location, will be determined after a government fact-finding team completes its on-site investigation.

Most media predicted difficulties in the ROKG receiving parliamentary approval for the dispatch because of possible objections from opposition parties, including the main opposition Democratic Party.

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White House Spokesman Robert Gibbs was quoted as saying in an Oct. 30 statement: "This is an important contribution to the international effort in Afghanistan and to fostering reconstruction and stability in the region."

Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized: "The troops and police officers to be deployed this time are not combat forces. Other countries have also sent military and police forces for protection when they sent their PRT to help with the rebuilding work in Afghanistan. Currently, there are 68,000 U.S. troops and 100,000 military forces from 40 countries in Afghanistan. With battles with militants, such as the Taliban, becoming increasingly fierce, however, they are not in a position to ensure the safety of the PRTs from each country. It is essential that the ROK deploy troops to protect its PRT."

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized: "It is not easy to accept the ROKG's explanation as it is. There may be unofficial and indirect requests from the U.S. The ROKG said that it decided to deploy troops, considering its own national interests, but it will be difficult for the government to provide a direct explanation to the people (for the troop deployment) because the issue is likely to be contentious. Still, the ROKG's stance is understandable. We support the Lee Administration's decision to deploy troops to Afghanistan. ... The ROKG must find the best way to minimize the sacrifice while maximizing efficiency."

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun argued in an editorial: "Whether the goal is to protect civilian workers or to engage in combat, sending troops to Afghanistan is madness, given the country's current state."

... For the Lee Administration to rush into a decision on its military deployment at this point in time cannot be read as anything but an attempt to curry favor with the U.S. prior to U.S. President Barack Obama's upcoming visit to the ROK. Seeing the government endangering young lives by redeploying forces even as the U.S. itself remains undecided on additional deployments, one cannot help asking who the Lee Administration really represents. The Lee Administration should cancel plans for redeployment."

#### 1N. Korea

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo and left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun today quoted Ri Gun, Director General of American Affairs at North Korea's Foreign Ministry, as telling reporters on Oct. 30 after attending a seminar in New York that he had useful talks with U.S. officials.

CONSENSUS BEFORE DISPATCH

(JoongAng Ilbo, October 31, 2009, Page 34)

The Lee Myung-bak Administration announced yesterday that it has formulated a plan to send a group of civilians to Afghanistan to support the provincial reconstruction team and troops. Where in Afghanistan and how many will be sent has not yet been finalized. The government is considering sending around 130 civilians and a 300-strong contingent of troops. Afghanistan is where 23 missionaries from Korea's Saemmul Church were kidnapped in 2007 by the Taliban. Two were murdered. The captives - aside from the two who were murdered - were released after 40 days. The government has since withdrawn its Dasan and Dongui medical support military units from Afghanistan. Two soldiers from the units died in action. The government has decided to send troops again to this high-risk region, and there's bound to be some controversy and debate until the deployment receives approval of the National Assembly.

The reason for the deployment lies in the need to solidify the Korea-U.S. alliance by supporting the United States' military campaign in the war-torn nation. The government, however, said Washington did not make any specific demand for troops and Seoul made its own decision to send personnel based on its desire to raise the country's position in the international community. It is not easy to accept the ROKG's explanation as it is. There may be

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unofficial and indirect requests from the U.S. The ROKG said that it decided to deploy troops, considering its own national interests, but it will be difficult for the government to provide a direct explanation to the people (for the troop deployment) because the issue is likely to be contentious. Still, the ROKG's stance is understandable. We support the Lee Administration's decision to deploy troops to Afghanistan. We agree with the government's explanation that Korea must make a contribution to the international community that matches its national power. Above all, we believe the deployment is necessary, taking into account the gains that Korea will see from the reinforced alliance with the United States.

Minister of National Defense Kim Tae-young said at the National Assembly on October 29, "There could be inevitable hostilities and casualties." It was right for the ROKG not to hide any of the dangers of the troop dispatch. The ROKG should give more convincing reasons why Seoul should send troops to Afghanistan despite its associated dangers. Where the troops will be sent should be carefully selected based on security. Casualties may be inevitable; however the deployment is not being carried out to fight in combat but to provide support for reconstruction. Therefore, the ROKG must find the best way to minimize the sacrifice while maximizing efficiency. Based on such efforts, the government must persuade the people and send the troops after winning a consensus from the nation.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper. We compared the English version on the website with the Korean version and added some sentences in English to make them identical.)

LEE GOVERNMENT MUST CANCEL TROOP REDEPLOYMENT TO AFGHANISTAN

(Hankyoreh Shinmun, October 31, 2009, Page 23)

Yesterday the Lee Administration and ruling Grand National Party (GNP) announced their plan for assistance in Afghanistan, which involves a large-scale increase in Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) personnel and the deployment of soldiers to protect them. The reason they are giving is that the deployment of soldiers is inevitable to protect civilian workers, but anyone can see that redeployment of military forces is at the heart of the assistance plan. An emphasis on sending PRT personnel is merely a smokescreen to avoid criticism of the deployment of more than twice as many military troops than civilian workers. In essence, the Lee government is acknowledging that this is a deployment without

legitimacy or justification.

Whether the goal is to protect civilian workers or to engage in combat, sending troops to Afghanistan is madness, given the country's current state, and it must be stopped. Since the whole region has now been transformed into a battlefield, it cannot be said that the South Korean troops being sent to provide protection for PRT workers will not experience combat. From the standpoint of Afghanistan's rebel army, all foreign soldiers deployed to Afghanistan are enemies who should be killed. Given that more than 50 U.S. troops died in October alone, there is a very strong chance we will see casualties among the South Korean forces. Even Defense Minister Kim Tae-young said in his response to the National Assembly the day before yesterday, "There could be inevitable hostilities and casualties."

Deployments and losses are acceptable as long as the public's sympathy for the justification has been established. However, the Lee government has been unable to produce any worthy justification thus far. Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan says that South Korea has an obligation to contribute to the war on terror in order to become a "global Korea," and, in support of this, he says that assistance in Afghanistan is necessary in order to establish conditions for the continued stable stationing of U.S. Forces in South Korea, but this is utterly unconvincing. The war in Afghanistan has long since gone beyond the level of the "war on terror" to become a full-scale war, and the talk about conditions for stationing USFK appears to be nothing more than a cheap ploy to legitimize deployment by provoking citizens' anxieties about national security. If some of the USFK

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are transferred to Afghanistan, it would be in accordance with the "strategic flexibility" agreement between South Korea and the U.S. and has nothing to do with the issue of South Korean troop deployments to Afghanistan, something that Yu Myung-hwan surely knows better than anyone.

For the Lee Administration to rush into a decision on its military deployment at this point in time cannot be read as anything but an attempt to curry favor with the U.S. prior to U.S. President Barack Obama's upcoming visit to the ROK. Seeing the government endangering young lives by redeploying forces even as the U.S. itself remains undecided on additional deployments, one cannot help asking who the Lee Administration really represents. The Lee Administration should cancel plans for redeployment.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

TIME FOR DIALOGUE NOT OPLAN 5029  
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, November 2, 2009, Page 27)

OPLAN 5029, the South Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command operational plan that serves as a blueprint for dealing with a "sudden change" in North Korea's political situation, is once again becoming the topic of controversy. Yesterday, the Yonhap News reported a high-ranking source in the government as saying that the plan's draft is based on five or six scenarios of upheaval in North Korea, including the outflow of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), a civil war resulting from a regime change or coup d'etat, a South Korean hostage incident within North Korea, a large-scale defection of North Korean residents, and a large-scale natural disaster. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff issued an immediate denial statement calling the account "contrary to the facts," while officials with the Cheong Wa Dae (the presidential office in South Korea or Blue House) and Defense Ministry have either refused to comment or have given an answer along the lines of, "We have had an agreement with the U.S. regarding OPLAN 5029 in place since last year." In other words, they have effectively acknowledged that some exchange has taken place behind the scenes. It also follows along with an Oct. 30 remark made by General Walter Sharp, U.S. Forces Korea Commander, that the two countries have agreed that, even after wartime operational command has been transferred to South Korea., the U.S. military will take the initiative in any elimination of North Korean WMDs and in any Marine

Corps assault landing.

Close cooperation and thorough planning between South Korea and the U.S. to prepare for the possibility of internal strife in North Korea are necessary. However, it is exceedingly dangerous to make preparations that emphasize military operations. Even if some sudden upheaval should arise in North Korea, it could settle down of its own accord over time, and there are always ways to calm the situation that do not involve military operations, including international cooperation and inter-Korean dialogue. OPLAN 5029, which presumes military operations in the event of an upheaval in North Korea, could very likely shut off a path to a peaceful resolution and provoke a war. There are also quite a number of sensitive issues that need to be considered, including the lack of agreement between the U.S. and its focus on eliminating nuclear weapons and other WMDs, and South Korea and its focus on preventing war, as well as the sovereignty dispute between the two countries over operational command and the possibility of international warfare resulting from Chinese intervention. It is for these very reasons that discussions had been limited to conceptual plans instead of extending into operational plans during the Roh Moo-hyun Administration.

Currently, the trend in the political situation on the Korean Peninsula has been to move away from sanctions and towards dialogue following Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's visit to North Korea. North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, whose rumored ill health the South Korean government considered the most important factor influencing a potential North Korean upheaval, has been confirmed through various

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channels to be quite well. Now is the time for our government to focus all its energies on restoring inter-Korean dialogue in order to avoid falling behind the international current, rather than fixating on a revival of OPLAN 5029, which could easily lead to the calamity of war.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

WILL ROK AND U.S. PUSH AHEAD WITH OPCON TRANSFER?  
(Dong-a Ilbo, November 2, 2009, Page 35)

USFK Commander Gen. Walter Sharp said last week that even after the OPCON transfer and the dissolution of the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces in 2012, the U.S. military will be taking the initiative in any elimination of North Korean WMDs and in a Marine Corps assault landing. He stated at an international conference, hosted by the Council on Korea-U.S. Security Studies and the Dong-a Ilbo-affiliated Hwajeong Peace Foundation, "The ROK and the U.S. recently reached the agreement, considering that the ROK does not have the military capability to carry out such special operations." In a situation where the ROK military is undergoing difficulty securing its own sophisticated military capability, Gen. Sharp's remarks considerably eased public anxiety over national security.

In the event of an emergency, we must destroy about 1,000 targets in the North, such as nuclear arsenals, missile launch bases and major command posts. Our military capability is, however, not enough to hit these targets accurately and quickly. State-of-the art bombers, aircraft and cruise missiles must be mobilized from all around the world, including the U.S. territories and U.S. military bases in Japan. Aegis destroyers and interceptor missiles are also needed to counter a missile attack by North Korea. It is virtually impossible to handle these high-tech weapons on the Korean Peninsula without a U.S. commander. In that the ROK and the U.S. acknowledged the realistic limits (of the OPCON transfer) and came up with military alternatives, Gen. Sharp's statements are somewhat comforting.

Gen. Sharp noted, "If the operational control is transferred, the ROK-U.S. combined army and navy forces will be led by an ROK commander, and the combined air force will be led by the commander of the 7th U.S. Air Force in Korea, both under the control of the ROK Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff." This is a type of role division. However, this means that the unitary command system under

the commander of ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC), a position held by the USFK commander, will be separated into two systems in a more multi-layered and complicated way. Even if the U.S. military leads key landing operations and operations to remove weapons of mass destruction, joint operations may not go smoothly in general.

The U.S. repeatedly declared that it would establish a new military cooperation system in place of the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command and would continue to provide nuclear deterrence and complementary war capabilities to the ROK. However, Gen. Sharp's statement confirmed once again that the ROK's sole exercise of operational control would be limited. Therefore, we wonder whether we really need to push ahead with the early transfer of operational control. It would likely only weaken the combined defense capabilities.

The ROK and the U.S. should confront our security situation and the level of our military power and start again from the beginning in reassessing the timing for the OPCON transfer.

GUARD FORCES ARE NOT COMBATANT FORCES  
(Chosun Ilbo, October 31, 2009, page 31)

The ROKG announced on October 30 that it will increase the number of Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) personnel to 150 from the current 24 and send police officers and guard forces to protect them. The ROKG did not reveal the size (of the contingent), but sources say that 200 to 300 troops and police officers will be deployed to Afghanistan. A Foreign Ministry Spokesman said that new

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PRT members will work to enhance the administrative capabilities of the local government, rebuild the economy, establish social infrastructure and provide humanitarian support. He added, "Troops and police will devote themselves to defense and will not take part in combat operations."

The ROKG sent 200 military medics and engineers to Afghanistan in 2002 but pulled them out of the country in late 2007. Early next year, ROK troops will again be sent to Afghanistan to protect PRT personnel.

Medics and engineers withdrew after 20 ROK missionaries were taken hostage by armed rebels and two of them were killed. This is why ROK people may raise concerns over redeployment of troops even though they will be dispatched only for self-defense.

The troops and police officers to be deployed this time are not combat forces. Other countries have also sent military and police forces for protection when they sent their PRT to help with the rebuilding work in Afghanistan. Currently, there are 68,000 U.S. troops and 100,000 military forces from 40 countries in Afghanistan.

With battles with militants, such as the Taliban, becoming increasingly fierce, however, they are not in a position to ensure the safety of the PRTs from each country. It is essential that the ROK deploy troops to protect its PRT.

The ROK ranks among the top 15 economies in the world and will host the next G20 summit. What would have become of the ROK without international support during the Korean War and afterwards? The ROK, which is so indebted to the international community, should not neglect to help others. We will not be able to play a leading role (in international relations) and gain true international recognition if we turn a blind eye to the world's most urgent issues such as the war in Afghanistan.

The ROKG should make sure that its planned troop deployment is not (intended) for military involvement but is aimed at helping rebuild Afghanistan. In particular, we should be cautious not to incite the Islamic nations. The National Assembly also should discuss this matter while considering the safety of personnel being sent there and the ROK's national interest.

FEATURES  
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POLL: SIXTY PERCENT SAY CONSTITUTIONAL COURT RULING ON MEDIA REFORM  
LEGISLATION IS WRONG

(Hankyoreh Shinmun, November 2, 2009, Page 5)

By Reporter Park Chang-ik

Research Plus poll shows that the Four Major Rivers Restoration Project is the most unpopular Lee Administration project, and that concern about protecting freedom of expression is spreading among young voters

In the Oct. 28 National Assembly by-elections, the Grand National Party (GNP) suffered complete defeat in strategic regions such as the Seoul area and Chungcheong Provinces. In consideration of these recent results combined with President Lee Myung-bak's relatively high approval rating, there is an increased interest in the real undercurrents of public opinion.

An opinion poll conducted Saturday by Research Plus at the behest of the Hankyoreh put forward six controversial Lee Administration policies and asked respondents to indicate which ones they found most problematic. The overwhelming top choice regardless of region, age or political party support is the Four Major Rivers Restoration Project at 41.4 percent.

When broken down by age groups, 48.1 percent of those in their 30s and 53.7 percent of those in their 40s chose the Four Major Rivers Restoration Project as the most problematic. Those in their 50s and

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60s count the Four Major Rivers Restoration Project as the most problematic, but at lower levels of 37.3 percent and 29.8 percent, respectively. It is noteworthy that those in their 30s and 40s, the age brackets that drive public opinion, are most strongly opposed to the Four Major Rivers Restoration Project. The poll also confirms that negative feelings towards the Four Major Rivers Restoration Project increase in relation to an increase in education levels and income.

The second and third choices are the handling of the media-related legislation (11.2 percent) and the press policy that includes the ousting of television hosts (MCs) Kim Je-dong and Son Seok-hee (8.9 percent). It is noteworthy that 19.8 percent of those in their 20s and 16.7 percent of those in their 30s list the railroading of the media related bills through the National Assembly as most problematic. Some 15.8 percent of those in their 20s indicate the ousting of Kim Je-dong and Son Seok-hee as the most problematic. This reveals that concerns about violations of freedom of expression have spread widely among those in their 20s and 30s. The remaining list of problematic issues include the emphasis on pushing through the reduced Sejong City Development Plan (8.5 percent), the handling of the Yongsan tragedy (7.8 percent) and the labor policy that includes the banning of wages to full-time unionists (5.6 percent).

This strong concern among young people about (possible infringements of) the freedom of expression is also revealed in response to questions about the Constitutional Court's recent decision on the media reform legislation. Some 60.4 percent of respondents feel that the Constitutional Court's decision was wrong. On this same survey item, 74.7 percent of those their 20s, 71.8 percent of those in their 30s and 66.8 percent of those in their 40s feel the decision was wrong. Moreover, 71.3 percent of those currently enrolled in a university and 67 percent of those with undergraduate degrees or higher believe the decision was wrong, and 71.3 percent of those making more than 4 million Won per month also believe the decision was wrong. Opinions regarding the Constitutional Court's decision on the media reform legislation grow more negative as education levels and income increase.

On the policy of redeploying troops to Afghanistan, opposition (49.8 percent) was slightly higher than support (42.4 percent). Men and women were at odds, with 54.4 percent of men supporting the troop deployment and 41.3 percent opposing it, and 30.8 percent of women supporting it and 58.0 percent opposing it.

The phone survey results are taken from a nationwide sample of 1000 adults, 19 years old and older. The results indicate a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percent at a confidence level of 95 percent.

STEPHENS